



MASSBAR FOUNDATION

TOGETHER IN THE PROMISE OF JUSTICE

2023 EASTERN MASS. GRANTEE RECEPTION



**MBA OFFICE
20 WEST STREET
BOSTON, MA**

**October 12, 2023
5:30 PM**

AGENDA

Opening Remarks

Angela C. McConney, Esq.

Overview of 2023 Grantmaking

Introduction of Grantee Remarks

Georgia Katsoulomitis, Esq.

Massachusetts Law Reform Institute

Reflections from a Grantee

Virginia Benzan, Esq.

Massachusetts Law Reform Institute

Introduction of President's Award

Angela C. McConney, Esq.

President's Award Honoree Remarks

John Achatz, Esq.

Access to Justice Fellow

Closing Remarks

Angela C. McConney, Esq.

2023 LEGAL INTERN FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM

Created to inspire a future generation of public interest attorneys while increasing staff resources at MA legal aid organizations, this program is generously funded by the MBF Fellows, the Smith Family, and the MBA Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Committee.



Virginia Ambeliotis

Boston College Law School
Political Asylum/Immigration Rep. (PAIR) Proj.



Katherine Blankinship *(Smith Fellow)*

Boston University School of Law
MetroWest Legal Services



Sydney Blomstrom *(Smith Fellow)*

Boston College Law School
Volunteer Lawyers Project



Abby Gould

Boston University School of Law
MetroWest Legal Services



Timothy Scalona

Suffolk University Law School
Harvard Legal Aid Bureau



Ali Shafi *(MBA DEI Fellow)*

Boston College Law School
Prisoners' Legal Services of MA

2023 Grantee Speaker



Virginia Benzan, Esq.



Attorney Virginia Benzan was a staff attorney at Massachusetts Law Reform Institute (MLRI) in their immigration group from 2008-2011. Following her time there, she directed the Immigration Clinic at Suffolk University Law School and then served as an Asylum Officer and Training Officer at USCIS. Virginia rejoined MLRI in 2020 as its Race, Equity, and Justice Attorney.

In addition to immigration law, Virginia also has a background in criminal defense, housing, and family law, as well as extensive litigation, legislative, and administrative advocacy experience. Prior to attending law school, she served as a Congressional Aide to Senator Edward Markey. She has also served as a longtime board member at Citizens for Juvenile Justice. She provides statewide leadership to the legal aid community on how to collectively advance a cohesive and effective anti-poverty focused race equity agenda in Massachusetts.

Virginia earned her BA from the College of the Holy Cross and her JD from Northeastern University School of Law.

THANK YOU GRANTEEES

We would like to thank the staff of MBF Grantee organizations for your hard work and dedication to access to justice. Thank you for being here tonight!



2023 CHIEF JUSTICE GANTS JUDICIAL SCHOLARS

The late Chief Justice Gants was a champion of access to justice and equity in the Massachusetts legal system. This program was conceived in his memory to give Massachusetts law students the opportunity to gain valuable experience in the judicial system, while also creating equity by increasing pathways to successful legal, public service and judicial careers.



Andrew Anderton

Emilia Ball

Daisha Bishop

Hui Chen

Lahela Delaney

Abigail Druhot

Nadia Eldemery

Aurouramary Estaba

Alexander Garcia

Jack Heavner

Tracey Kelly

Andrew Kish

Daniel Martinez

Emilee Morin

Micaela Partinico

Ian Phipps

Zachary Polen

Hannah Saturley

2023 SPECIAL GRANTS



Massachusetts Bar Association
MA Supreme Judicial Court
Judicial Youth Corps Program
\$40,000



Gann Academy
MA Mock Trial Championship
\$2,500

2023 President's Award



John Achatz, Esq. *Access to Justice Fellow*

John Achatz practiced real estate law in Boston, first as an associate and then partner at Brown, Rudnick, Freed & Gesmer, and later as Of Counsel with Klein Hornig LLP. His practice centered on development, preservation, and financing of affordable housing and urban mixed-use projects. A small but especially satisfying specialty was representing groups of artists in creating artist-owned live-work studio buildings.

John participated in the founding of the Volunteer Lawyers for the Arts, the Lawyers Clearinghouse, and the American Bar Association Forum on Affordable Housing. He has served on the boards of Emmanuel Music, Boston Lyric Opera, Boston Shakespeare Company, and Old Stories: New Lives, among others. He was also a trustee of the Boston Conservatory.

As an Access to Justice Fellow since 2018, John has been a volunteer attorney with legal services organizations, representing and advising immigration clients seeking asylum and other forms of protection. Originally at De Novo Center for Justice and Healing, he has since volunteered with many other organizations, including Immigrant Family Services Institute, Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition, Political Asylum/Immigration Representation Project, and Rian Immigrant Center.

John is an Oliver Wendell Holmes Fellow of the MBF. He has been a dedicated grant review volunteer for nearly two decades.

2023/2024 IOLTA Grant Award Recipients

Barnstable County

Barnstable Cty Bar Assn., Probate & Family Court, \$19,920
Cape Mediation, Mediation & Conciliation Program, \$18,000
WE CAN, Legal Assistance Program, \$17,000

Berkshire County

Berkshire Cty Regional Housing Authority, Housing Services and Mediation Program, \$36,000
Berkshire Immigrant Center, Immigration Legal Services and Education, \$25,000
Health Law Advocates, Inc., Mental Health Advocacy Program for Kids, \$20,000

Bristol County

Bristol Cty Bar Assn., Pro Bono Conciliation Prog., \$10,000
Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Fall River, Immigration Law Programs, \$110,000
Court Appointed Special Advocates of Bristol County, Immigration Law Programs, \$10,000
South Coastal Counties Legal Services, General Support Grant, \$221,768
The Women's Center, Legal Advocacy Program, \$30,000

Essex County

Children's Law Center of MA, Child & Adolescent Legal Services (CALs) Program, \$65,000
Essex County Bar Assn., Housing Program, \$20,500
Essex County Bar Assn., Multi-Court Pro Bono Conciliation Program, \$23,580
Essex County Bar Assn., Probate & Family Program, \$20,468

Grant Recipients (Cont'd.)

Essex County (Cont'd.)

Jeanne Geiger Crisis Center, Domestic Violence Family Law Program, \$38,316

Northeast Legal Aid, General Support Grant, 159,066

The Resolution Center, Court & Community Mediation, \$9,000

Franklin County

Collaborative Resolutions Group, Family Mediation, \$20,000

Franklin Cty Bar Assn., Legal Aid Program, \$55,000

Quabbin Mediation, Four-County Mediation Services, \$30,000

Hampden County

Community Legal Aid, General Support Grant, \$179,558

Hampden County Bar Assn., Children's Law Project, \$70,000

Hampden County Bar Foundation, Legal Clinic, \$15,000

Western New England University School of Law Center for Social Justice, Consumer Debt Initiative, \$25,000

Hampshire County

Center for New Americans, Citizenship & Imm. Prog, \$20,000

Hampshire Cty Bar Assn., HELP & DRPC, \$15,000

Safe Passage, Legal Advice & Referral Panel, \$27,500

Middlesex County

Community Dispute Settlement Center, Divorce/Family/Juvenile District Court Mediation, \$17,500

De Novo, General Support Grant, \$150,170

Housing Families, Homelessness Prev. & Legal Svcs., \$30,000

Jewish Family & Children's Service, Bet Tzedek Legal Services, \$15,000

Grant Recipients (Cont'd.)

Middlesex County (Cont'd.)

Mediation Works Inc., Court Mediation Program, \$12,000

MetroWest Legal Services, General Support Grant, \$150,170

MetroWest Mediation Services, Court Mediation & Conciliation Services, \$20,000

Middlesex Cty Bar Assn., Pro Bono Conciliation, \$15,000

Saheli, Legal Advocacy Program, \$16,900

The Second Step, Steps to Justice, \$20,000

Norfolk County

DOVE, Legal Advocacy Program, \$25,000

Plymouth County

Pilgrim Advocates, Lawyer of the Day, \$12,000

Plymouth Cty Bar Assn., Probate & Family Court Conciliation Program, \$5,000

Suffolk County

Alternatives for Community & Environment (ACE), Free Legal Assistance for Environmental Justice, \$10,000

Boston CASA, Court Appointed Special Advocates for Children & Youth, \$15,000

Casa Myrna Vazquez, Legal Advocacy Program, \$50,000

Finex House, Legal Advocacy Program, \$23,000

Flaschner Judicial Institute, Education Programs & Publications for Judges, \$175,000

Greater Boston Legal Services, General Support, \$250,284

HarborCOV, Immigration Services for DV Survivors, \$10,000

Health Law Advocates, Medical-Legal Partnership for Immigrants, \$25,000

Grant Recipients (Cont'd.)

Suffolk County (Cont'd.)

Immigrant Family Services Institute, Legal Services, \$25,000

JRI Health Law Institute, Serving the Underserved: Closer to Home, \$15,000

Justice at Work, Immigrant Workers Project, \$30,000

KIND, Legal & Social Services for Children, \$25,000

Lawyers Clearinghouse, MA Legal Clinic for the Homeless & Low-Income Residents, \$20,500

Lawyers for Civil Rights, HealthJustice, \$10,000

Mabel Center for Immigrant Justice, Legal Rep., \$20,000

MA Advocates for Children, Children's Law Support & Education Justice Project, \$50,000.00

MA Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition, 40-Hour Immigration Law Training, \$15,000

MA Law Reform Institute, Mass Legal Answers, \$10,000

MA Law Reform Institute, Statewide Equity, Stability & Justice Project, \$60,000

Pension Action Center, Helpline & Case Advocacy for Older Adults, \$15,000

Pine Street Inn, Homeless Court Program, \$15,000

Political Asylum/Immigration Representation Project, Asylum & Detention Program, \$115,000

Prisoners' Legal Services, Health Equity & Brutality Proj, \$80,000

Rian Immigrant Center, Immigration Legal Services, \$50,000

Rosie's Place, Legal Clinics for Women, \$17,500

Third Sector New England, Family Law Project at the Mental Health Legal Advisors Committee, \$38,000

Veterans Legal Services, Legal Aid Services, \$60,000

Victim Rights Law Center, Pro Bono Enrichment Project: Improving Services for Marginalized Survivors, \$5,500.00

Women's Bar Foundation of MA, Family Law Project, \$25,000

Grant Recipients (Cont'd.)

Worcester County

Ascentria Community Services, Immigration Legal Assistance Program, \$75,000

CASA Project, Child Court Advocacy Program, \$50,000

Catholic Charities Diocese of Worcester, Immigration Legal Assistance Program, \$30,000

Community Legal Aid, General Support Grant, \$169,812

Dismas House of Central MA, BAR None Program, \$28,500

YWCA of Central MA, Court Advocacy, \$25,000

23/24 Grants At-A-Glance

- 75 grants awarded, totaling \$3.4 million.
- \$817,012 increase in funding over 22/23.
- Highest funding amount since 2012.
- 70 organizations funded statewide.
- 9 new programs funded.
- 87 Grant Review volunteers participated.

Connect




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Contact

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 www.MassBarFoundation.org

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